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ABSTRACT

After faculty collective bargaining elections were held in the 14-campus Pennsylvania State College system and Temple University, questionnaires were administered to a sample of faculty. The objectives of the research were to identify relationships between the independent variable of faculty voting behavior in these elections and the following dependent variables: demographic characteristics, attitudes about competing associations, the extent to which internal versus external governance matters influenced voting behavior, attitudes about scope of negotiations, satisfaction with certain issues, and how or if faculty changed their votes in the run-off elections. (Author)

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"Faculty Voting Behavior in the Collective Bargaining Elections for the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University System and Temple University"

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Session 9.05: Research on University Faculty: Role and Group Profiles

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This paper reports on two studies of faculty voting behavior in collective bargaining agent elections for the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University System and Temple University.* Both elections were conducted under the auspices of Pennsylvania Public Sector labor legislation.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to ascertain the relationship between the independent variable of faculty voting behavior in collective bargaining elections and the following dependent variables: demographic characteristics, attitudes toward associations contending for agency status, attitudes about internal versus external governance as influences on voting behavior, attitudes about the scope of negotiations, and attitudes about the use of the strike.

There was a run-off election for Temple, and the research also attempted to ascertain any significance in the attitudes of faculty members who changed their votes in this second election.

Methodology

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of Pennsylvania State College faculty in the winter of 1972 to cover a fall 1971 election.

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*G. Gregory Lozier and Kenneth P. Mortimer, Anatomy of a Collective Bargaining Election in Pennsylvania's State-Owned Colleges (University Park, Pa.: Center for the Study of Higher Education, February, 1974); and Kenneth P. Mortimer and Naomi Ross, "A Survey of Faculty Voting Behavior in the Temple University Collective Bargaining Election" (unpublished manuscript, 1974).

A similar instrument was sent to a sample of Temple faculty in the winter of 1973 following a fall 1972 election. The overall response rates were 59 and 57 percent for the State College and Temple surveys respectively. For both surveys, respondents' voting behavior was tested against actual votes cast, and it was determined that no statistically significant respondent bias existed on this variable.

The data were analyzed by means of chi-square tests of statistical independence and of theoretical proportions, and by analysis of variance. In cases where the null hypothesis was rejected, appropriate follow-up tests were employed to identify those contrasts which were significant.

Election Results

The election in the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University system was won by an affiliate of the National Educational Association, which received 55.5 percent of the total vote on the first ballot. The American Association of University Professors received 35.4 percent of the vote, the American Federation of Teachers 4.4 percent, and the "No Representative" option 4.7 percent. There were 3618 votes cast.

In the Temple election the American Federation of Teachers received 30.0 percent of the ballots, the American Association of University Professors received 27.7 percent, the National Education Association affiliate received 25.6 percent, and the "No Representative" option received 16.7 percent of the votes in the first election. The run-off election between the AFT and AAUP resulted in an AAUP victory, 626 votes to 437.

Demographic Characteristics

The following characteristics were compared with voting behavior: academic rank, tenure status, sex, age, full-time/part-time status, academic discipline, number of institution-wide and school or college committees served on, the number of years spent in continuous service at the current institution, at other institutions of higher education, and in elementary and/or secondary schools. The State College respondents were also asked to identify the percent of their time spent in instruction related to teacher education.

In the State College election a remarkably distinct profile emerged of the two major groups of voters, the supporters of the NEA and AAUP. Profiles of AFT and "No Representative" supporters were less pronounced. Those who voted for the affiliate of the NEA were older, more likely to be tenured, more likely to hold academic appointments in an education-oriented discipline, were significantly more involved in teacher education, and had more teaching experience in elementary and secondary schools and in other state colleges. Those who voted for the AAUP were more likely to be appointed in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, were younger, had less teaching experience in state colleges, and were more likely to have had experience in colleges and universities other than the Pennsylvania State Colleges. In point of fact, our data show that support for the NEA affiliate and the AAUP respectively reflects the dichotomy that exists in former state teachers colleges between the "old guard" teacher education faculty and the "new breed" liberal arts oriented faculty.

The Temple data on the demographic variables were less definitive. In the first election those who voted for the AFT were significantly younger than those who voted for any of the other three options. Those who voted for the AFT and the "No Representative" option had less experience at other colleges and universities than those who voted for either the NEA affiliate or the AAUP. The distribution of voting behavior among the various academic areas of arts and humanities, business, education, sciences, social sciences and library proved to be significant, but no single pairwise contrast was significant.

For the run-off election, there were only two significant demographic differences. A statistically greater percentage of those who voted for the AAUP was tenured than the percentage of those who voted for the AFT. In addition, the mean age of those who voted for the AFT was significantly lower than the mean age of those who voted for the AAUP. The most notable comparison in the two sets of data for the State Colleges and Temple was the significantly lower mean age for AFT supporters in both elections.

Opinions About Faculty Associations

The respondents in both studies were asked to indicate which of the three national associations best exemplified eight different descriptors. The faculty in both the State Colleges and Temple University revealed a considerable degree of consensus that the AAUP was most prestigious (79 and 90 percent respectively), most professionally oriented (64 and 84 percent respectively) and the least likely to strike (68 and 79 percent respectively). Faculty in both studies also agreed

that the AFT was the most union oriented of the associations (92 and 94 percent respectively) and had the greatest historical commitment to collective bargaining (69 and 84 percent respectively). The faculty in the State Colleges believed that the NEA had the most visibility within Pennsylvania, (91 percent) and the greatest lobbying potential in Harrisburg (88 percent), whereas at Temple only 39 percent and 44 percent attributed these qualities to the NEA. These latter percentages were the highest figures received by the NEA for the Temple election. The good showing for AFT in the election was reflected in the considerably higher recognition than for the State College election that the AFT and not the NEA had the most visibility within Pennsylvania (49 percent) and the greatest lobbying potential in Harrisburg (47 percent). This fact can probably be accounted for partially by the impact made by the AFT's presence in the Philadelphia school system and community college.

In both studies the majority of respondents agreed with what had been hypothesized as accurate descriptors of the AAUP and AFT. There was disagreement at Temple over whether the NEA or AFT had visibility and lobbying power within Pennsylvania. In fact, the NEA was not successful in generating a clear image of dominance for any of the eight descriptors.

To the extent that respondents significantly deviated from consensual judgment when voting behavior was held constant, differences typically reflected a bias toward the association for which the respondent voted.

Internal Versus External Governance

The respondents in both studies were asked to rank each of six statements according to the extent that it influenced their initial choice of a bargaining agent. Three of these statements expressed concerns about internal factors (boards of trustees, presidents, and senates) and three concerns about external factors (governors and legislatures). For the State Colleges, the statement that was reputed to be most influential was "The association I voted for can best represent faculty interests in the state legislature and state government." On the other hand, the statement ranked as least influential was as follows: "Internal agents such as my institution's president and board of trustees have not responded to the needs and welfare of the faculty of my institution."

The Temple study indicated a very opposite direction for the State College first and last items. For example, the most influential statement for the Temple faculty was the least important upon the State College vote. On the other hand, the most influential statement for the State Colleges was only ranked fourth of six in the Temple study.

One has witnessed here an almost exact reversal in the set of factors influencing the choice of an agent. The Pennsylvania State College faculty indicated that they were more concerned about governance factors external to their institution, whereas the Temple faculty were more concerned about internal factors.

There were differences in both studies in the mean rankings of those statements which were significant when voting behavior was held constant. The research monographs on which this paper is based have discussed these findings in some detail. We regret there is not time to detail these findings here.

Scope of Negotiations

One objective of these studies was to determine whether faculty were more desirous of either a limited or a broad scope of negotiable issues, and the degree to which these desires corresponded to their level of satisfaction with the same issues. Accordingly, respondents were first requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with six general issues.

The faculty in both studies indicated that they were most satisfied with academic freedom issues. Conditions of employment, faculty personnel policies, and financial benefits were ranked almost identically in that order in the middle ranges of satisfaction by both Temple and State College faculty. However, whereas the State College faculty members were least satisfied with the determination of educational policy, this issue was ranked as the second most satisfactory issue at Temple. Correspondingly, the least satisfactory issue at Temple -- faculty participation in governance -- was the third most satisfactory issue in the State Colleges. These results appear on the surface to be consistent with the findings reported in the previous section regarding external versus internal governance factors as influences upon a faculty member's preference for a bargaining agent.

Respondents were also requested to rank the same six issues according to their negotiability. In both studies, financial benefits was ranked first as most negotiable, conditions of employment second, faculty personnel policies third, and faculty participation in governance fourth. State College faculty ranked academic freedom fifth and determination of educational policy sixth, whereas the Temple faculty reversed these rankings. Those issues for which there was the least

satisfaction -- educational policy for the State Colleges and faculty participation in governance at Temple -- were not necessarily most negotiable, ranking sixth and fourth for the State Colleges and Temple respectively in terms of their negotiability. This seems to suggest that despite a fair degree of dissatisfaction with the state of affairs on some issues, faculty members do not regard them as negotiable in the context of a college or university. However, an additional question in the State College study which included a list of twenty-three potentially negotiable items revealed little discrimination among the items which should and which should not be negotiated. In point of fact, most of the faculty, at least in the State Colleges, felt that almost all items were subjects of negotiation.

The Strike

A survey item dealing with the strike asked respondents to rank their agreement with six statements about the potential use of strikes. This item revealed that faculty members in the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University system and at Temple do not regard the strike as necessarily unprofessional or an inappropriate mechanism for impasse resolution. Collectively, respondents in these case studies expressed the attitude that though the strike is generally undesirable and should be avoided in most instances, it may be an appropriate sanction after other legal recourse has failed to resolve a grievance. In both studies, the AFT respondents were significantly more likely to agree to the use of the strike, while "No Representative" respondents regarded the strike as most unacceptable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, two of the findings of these studies warrant particular comment. First, major issues resulting in support for collective bargaining can be quite different in various institutions. The Pennsylvania State College faculty were more concerned about relations with the state legislature and governor, whereas Temple faculty were more concerned about faculty-administrative matters. Second, support for the AAUP and AFT appears to be derived from existing notions about these associations. The AAUP and AFT had relatively clear images in both elections. However, while the NEA had a clear image in the State Colleges, it was unable to project this image at Temple. In the latter election, the AFT made strong inroads into the NEA's claim of substantial visibility in Pennsylvania and political clout in Harrisburg.